

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

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P R 091540Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6912

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA JNEW

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION GENEVA

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 0714

KUWAIT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, JO

SUBJECT: NEW JORDANIAN CABINET FORMED

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1. SUMMARY: NEW CABINET FORMED BY PRIME MINISTER RIFAI HAS SAME 20-80 PERCENT WEST BANK-EAST BANK RATIO AS PREVIOUS POST-RABAT SUMMIT CABINET. FOUR NEW NAMES APPEAR AND THREE PORTFOLIOS SHUFFLED IN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO SHED DEADWOOD AND IMPROVE CABINET EFFECTIVENESS. LOCAL REACTION THUS FAR IS THAT NEW CABINET REPRESENTS CONTINUITY OF PAST POLICIES WHICH ASSOCIATED WITH CURRENT ECONOMIC BOOM AND DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS. AS KING NOTED, HOWEVER, NEW GOVERNMENT MUST DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, SPREADING WEALTH, AND EXPANDING SERVICES. END SUMMARY.

2. AT KING HUSSEIN'S REQUEST, ZAYD RIFAI ON FEBRUARY 8 FORMED NEW COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CABINET), HIS THIRD SINCE 1973. AS IN PREVIOUS CABINET, FOUR OF TWENTY MINISTERS ARE OF WEST BANK ORIGIN (MIN DEVELOPMENT & RECONSTRUCTION, MIN TOURISM, MIN OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MIN AWQAF & ISLAMIC AFFAIRS), AND ONE IS CHRISTIAN. TRADITIONAL CIRCASSIAN SLOT MISSING. FOUR NEW FACES APPEAR, FOUR HAVE BEEN DROPPED, AND THREE INCUMBENT MINISTERS HAVE SHIFTED POSTS WITHIN CABINET. FOLLOWING ARE BRIEF BIOS OF NEW APOINTEES (FURTHER DETAILS IN LATER REPORTS):

A. MINISTER OF SUPPLY - SALAH JUM'A (REPLACES 'ALI HASAN 'ODEH), ABOUT 45; EAST BANK AGRONOMIST FROM TAFILEH; MOST RECENT POST DEPUTY DIR-GEN OF AGRICULTURAL CREDIT CORPORATION; BROTHER OF FORMER PM SA'AD JUM'A AND SYG OF PRIME MINISTRY SA'D AD-DIN JUM'A; SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERS SOCIETY; FORMER DIRECTOR OF FORESTRY FOR FAO IN ROME AND PRESENT MEMBER OF FAO PROGRAMS COMMITTEE; ASSUMES POST WHOSE DUTIES ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM HIS PREVIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES.

B. MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS - HASAN IBRAHIM (REPLACES SADEQ ASH-SHAR'), LATE 40'S; PALESTINIAN FROM SAFAD; PROMOTED FROM POST OF SECRETARY-GENERAL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY; AUB GRADUATE; HIGHLY COMPETENT CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER; FORMER AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW; HEADED RECENT DIPLOMATIC DELEGATIONS TO MOSCOW AND DAMASCUS; CLOSE CONFIDANT OF PM RIFAI AND ONLY FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHO WAS INVOLVED (GENEVA AND RABAT CONFERENCES) IN MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS.

C. MINISTER OF LABOR (TITLE OF POSITION CHANGED; PREVIOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOR) - 'ISAM 'AJLUNI (REPLACING CIRCASSIAN SAMI AYYOUB), 47; EAST BANKER OF SAUDI ORIGIN, BORN IN AMMAN; WELL-REGARDED, CAREER CIVIL SERVANT WHOSE LAST POST WAS DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICE INSTITUTE (GOVERNMENT-RUN SCHOOL WHICH TRAINS SOCIAL WORKERS); STUDIED AT AUB, HAS ACADEMIC DEGREES FROM IRAQI AND EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITIES; LATER STUDIES AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IS US (CORNELL AND BERKELEY), JAMAICA, PUERTO RICO, AND PAKISTAN

UNDER AID GRANT; 1974 STATE DEPARTEMENT IV GRANTEE TO STUDY DRUG ADDICTION PREVENTION; ACTIVE IN YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL SERVICES, KNOWLEDGEABLE IN LABOR AFFAIRS.

D. MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR FOR MUNICIPAL AND RUFAL AFFAIRS - ISMA'IL AL-'ARMOUTI (REPLACES DR MOHAMMAD 'IDUB AZ-ZIBEN), EARLY FORTIES; EAST BANKER FROM SALT; ENTIRE CAREER SPENT IN MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (1962-PRESENT); MOST RECENTLY COMPTROLLER GENERAL IN THAT MINISTRY; HOLDS DEGREES FROM BAGHDAD AND LONDON UNIVERSITIES; AUTHOR OF BOOK ON ARAB ECONOMIC INTEGRATION.

3. PORTFOLIO SHUFFLES WITHIN CABINET:

A. DR MOHAMMAD 'IDUB AZ-ZIBEN FROM MINISTER OF INTERIOR FOR MUNICIPAL AND RURAL AFFIARS TO MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS;
B. AHMAD SHOBAKI FROM MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS TO MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS;
C. MAHMOUD HAWAMDEH FROM MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS TO MINISTER OF TRANSPORT;

4. FOUR MINISTERS NO LONGER APPEAR IN CABINET LIST: 'ODEH, ASH-SHAR', AND AYYOUB, MENTIONED ABOVE, AND FORMER MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS KHALID AL-HAJ HASAN.

5. COMMENT: AS EMBASSY REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, CABINET RESIGNATION AND REFORMATION PART OF SCENARIO OF RECENT PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS FOLLOWING KING HUSSEIN'S DECISION NOT TO HOLD JORDANIAN ELECTIONS IN MARCH. DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT USUALLY FOLLOWED PROCEDURALLY BY CABINET FEFORMATION, AND GOJ LIKES TO KEEP PROCEDURAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL NICETIES IN TACT IF POSSIBLE. EVENTS ALSO PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY TO REPLACE SOME DEADWOOD (ASH-SHAR', AYYOUB) WITH EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS (IBRAHIM AND JUM'A). OUSTER OF AL-HAJ HASAN MAY ALSO REPRESENT EFFORT TO RID CABINET

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OF ONE OF MORE WIDELY KNOWN EXAMPLES OF CORRUPTION IN HIGH PLACES. THE DECISION TO KEEP THE NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF WEST BANK ORIGIN LIMITED TO 4 (THEY WERE REDUCED TO THAT NUMBER IN 1974 FOLLOWING THE RABAT SUMMIT) UNDOUBTEDLY INTENDED TO SUPPORT KING HUSSEIN'S CLAIM OF MAINTAINING FIDELITY TO THE PRINCIPLES OF RABAT. RETENTION OF INCUMBENT MINISTER OF HEALTH QADHI (WHO HAS STRONG TRIBAL TGES) FOLLOWING EARLIER REPORTS OF HIS DETERMINATION TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST EAST BANKERS IN SENIOR GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS INDICATES KING IS SENSITIVE NOT TO OFFEND TRIBES AND MAY HAVE REVERSED PM RIFAI'S REPORTED EARLIER DECISION TO ACCEPT QADHI'S RESIGNATION. LOCAL PRESS EDITORIALS AS EXPECTED WELCOME NEW CAB FET WITH THEMES THAT IT REPRESENTS CONTINUITY OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY. EMBASSY BELIEVES MOST JORAANIANS WILL AGREE AND, ON THE WHOLE, WELCOME THAT CONTINUITY WHICH IS

ASSOCIATED WITH "YOU NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD" ECONOMIC BOOM AND
DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS. AT SAME TIME, NEW CABINET WILL HAVE TO SHOW
MOVEMENT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES OF INFLATION, MORE EQUITABLE
DISPERSAL OF INCREASED WEALTH, AND EXPANSION OF SERVICES,
AS PROMISED IN KING'S MESSAGE INSTRUCTING RIFAI TO FORM NEW
GOVERNMENT. NEW GOVERNMENT ALSO CONFIRMS PRIME MINISTER
RIFAI'S CONTINUED ENJOYMENT OF KING HUSSEIN'S CONFIDENCE,
AND IS BEGINNING TO SET A RECORD FOR A CONTINUOUS RUN AT THE
JOB IN A COUNTRY WHICH OVER THE SHORT TIME OF ITS LIFE CAN
RIVAL MANY IN CENTRAL AMERICA FOR THE NUMBER AND RAPIDITY
OF CHANGES IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP.
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